INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Note: Reading this cannot take the place of a mock interview with your Career Advisor, but is a great way to prep for one!

Please make a one hour Interview appointment with your advisor so we can actually help you answer some questions, rather than to just tell you how to answer them.

- **The point of an interview:** An employer is deciding 3 things: Your ability to do the job, your desire to do the job and if they like you. In business, your personality and likeability are very important. Interviewing is a lot like dating, both people are trying to decide if this is a good fit, and you need to be yourself, but on your best behavior.

- **Remember:** Your cover letter is to get the employer to look at your resume a little longer. Your resume is to get the employer to consider calling you. A phone interview is to land a face to face interview. And a face to face interview is to sell yourself and get the job!

- **Your cell phone and social media sites:** As soon as you start sending out resumes, make sure your voicemail is professional and says either your name or phone number so the employer calling you knows they’ve reached the right person. This would be a good time too to make sure your Facebook profile pic is conservative and your privacy settings are set.

- **Phone Interview:** Most companies will do a phone interview before a face to face interview with the exception of on-campus recruiting. This allows the company to rule out people before they waste their time bringing you in to their office.
  
  - A phone interview could be used as a screening tool or could be your interview! You won’t know until it gets started – it could be with a Recruiter or a VP. If it’s an out of state company, plan on a longer more in depth interview.

  - Be aware that the phone call could come at any time, if you take the call and are about to walk into class, politely let the caller know that you are very interested in talking to them but are on your way into class and try to arrange a different time to talk. **If you try to take the call in the hall, you will not do your best!** If they are just calling to set up a time to talk, then go ahead and set the time. Or, the call could be set up ahead of time via email.

  - For the call make sure you are available, have reception, have charged your phone, are awake, alert and sitting up! And make sure you have your resume in front of you, because they will. If they ask you to walk them through your resume, you won’t be able to!

  - At the end of the call - close the deal - state that you are interested in moving to the next step in the process, ask what that is and their timeframe is for getting back to candidates.

  - Get the person’s full name again and email address. You will send a short thank you via email after the call reiterating your interest. Simply say, “May I please get your email address, I would love to be able to follow up.”
• **The face to face interview – General Tips:** Bring a portfolio with a pad of paper, and possibly a calculator if you anticipate a case question (consulting and investment banking) and extra resumes. Make sure you know where you are going, have directions, phone numbers and details and **arrive 10 minutes early.** Have a firm handshake, sit up straight, make eye contact (with everyone in the room), DO NOT have your phone out or on, smile, relax, don’t fidget, be enthusiastic, don’t say UM, LIKE, YA KNOW, or YOU GUYS, pay attention to the question and answer the question asked, all parts of it. Wear your suit – all of it (yes, boys, the jacket too!) and shave!

  - If you think you would like to take notes, ask if it’s OK first, jotting down what they asked you can help you keep your train of thought if you think you’ll be too nervous. You can take up to 3 seconds to think, process and answer, but not much longer. You should spend about 2-3 minutes answering each question.
  - If they have really stumped you, repeat the question back to them to buy some time!
  - Negative questions – Always remain positive when asked negative questions. For example, “Tell me about a time you had a conflict with a student, co-worker, manager” When starting to answer a question about a negative situation, begin with a positive statement – Don’t blame or complain, describe problems as challenges. Focus on solutions rather than difficulties.

• **Types of Interview Questions:**
  - **Resume Questions** – very easy to answer, you’ve already lived it!
  - **Technical Questions** – expect a few questions that test your knowledge of a topic
  - **Behavioral Questions** – the majority of questions you will get in an interview are designed to find out how you have behaved in the past. Employers believe this is a good way to determine how you will behave in the future. They require a mini-story. They will start with “Tell me about a time….” See the sample behavioral questions to practice.
    - Pull your examples from school, projects, work, internships, life, etc. Have 5-6 success stories memorized for these questions. i.e., Teamwork, Conflict, Time Management, Organization, Stress, Leadership, Problem Solving
    - Your answer will be 2 minutes in length
    - You will tell them what was going on, what you did and how it ended
    - Think of the acronym C.A.R. – Challenge, Action Result
    - **Challenge:** Do not go on and on about what was going on, set the stage, give enough details for the listener to follow the story and then move on to your action. (**30 seconds**)
    - **Action:** This is the most important part of the story. People want to hire action oriented individuals. Talk about your actions in steps, “First I did this, then I did this and lastly I did this.” This shows you are systematic and organized. (**1-1 ½ minutes**)
    - **Results:** Always choose stories with good results and good endings! The only time you will tell a story with a negative result will be the question: Tell me about a time you set a goal and failed. (**10 seconds**)
  - **Case Questions** – A case question or a case interview is used as a way of evaluating certain characteristics of a candidate. It is an analysis of a business or open-ended question or problem where you are asked to “crack the case”. It is a way to find out both your analytical and creative problem solving capabilities. You are not required to have a right answer, but just a rough, yet basically accurate answer.
    - Usually only for consulting positions, and some investment banks—
Questions could be business cases, brain teasers, riddles, mental math etc.
- Take notes, ask questions, maintain eye contact and take your time.
- Think out loud and present your thinking clearly and logically. Your interviewer wants to know that you can reason in a rapid and logical fashion.
- Google “Practice case interviews” for help – Deloitte has great samples.

**At the end of the interview**
- Have questions that you have prepared ahead of time to ask them, make sure they are relevant to your job and something you really want to know. Don’t ask how they like working there or what they do. See our list of sample questions to ask.
- Ask for business cards from everyone in the room, send a thank you email that day, and a handwritten thank you through the U.S. Mail to the person leading the interview and coordinating the process for you.
- Take the time to give one last sales pitch if you think you didn’t get a chance to sell yourself or you messed up some questions. Don’t backtrack, it’s too late, just tell them sincerely why you are so interested. (If it went well, you won’t need to do this)